

2015 Preservation Award for Outstanding Local Preservation

Project

Governor's Award

Borden Hotel in Whitehall

Presented by Lt. Governor Angela McLean

Myrna Loy Center, Helena

January 23, 2015

This year, it is Governor Bullock, and my, honor and privilege to award the special Governor's Award for Historic Preservation to the Borden Hotel Rehabilitation Project in Whitehall as the 2015 Outstanding Local Preservation Project.

Built in 1913 by Lot and Hilda Borden at the busy corner of Legion and Main Streets, the Borden Hotel building housed a hotel, tavern, dance hall and restaurant. Over the years, it flourished and grew as a hub for travelers and a social center for the community. Proprietor Hilda Borden was famous for her generosity, and known as a shrewd businesswoman. After her death in 1971 and the discontinuation of railroad passenger traffic, subsequent owners struggled to keep the business, and building, afloat.

Despite their best efforts, the demands of updating and maintaining proved overwhelming, and by the turn of the 21st century, the building stood shuttered, leaking rain through the roof like sieve.

On March 6, 2009, Whitehall's small commercial district suffered another loss: a devastating fire destroyed five storefront buildings in the block adjacent to Borden's. The community soon rallied and committed to revitalizing their downtown. They quickly recognized that their remaining landmark buildings should serve as a catalyst for redevelopment. Jefferson Local Development Corporation took the lead by working with local partners to purchase and restore the Borden Hotel.

The State Historic Preservation Office awarded the Jefferson Local Development Corporation funding to conduct a feasibility study and list the building in the National Register. A public/private partnership between Rocky Mountain Bank of Whitehall, Barrick Golden Sunlight Mine, and the Jefferson Local Development Corporation made the building's purchase, immediate roof repair, and eventual rehabilitation, possible. Working with High Plains Architects and Martel Construction, the meticulous repair and restoration process began less than one year ago.

Now the Borden is officially open for business, with retail and office space at the street level and nine apartments at the second story. The project's public/private partnership has enhanced property values, generated local, state, and federal tax revenues, and created jobs. This project was so successful that it has encouraged other community revitalization efforts, including the rehabilitation of Roper's building next door.

This effort will serve as inspiration for other Montana communities and mainstreets across the state for many years to come. It is through such local public and private cooperation that the remarkable history of Montana is often preserved. Please join me in recognizing the Borden Hotel Rehabilitation Project as not only the Outstanding Local Preservation Project, but also this year's special Governor's Award winner. Accepting the award are Tara Mastel of the Jefferson Local Development Corporation, Chris Rehor, President of the JLDC Board of Directors, Roy McBride, President of the Whitehall Branch of Rocky Mountain bank, and Tony and Jason Martel of Martel Construction.